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## INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

# The Effectiveness of the Rolling Thunder Program in North Vietnam

1 January - 30 September 1966

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THE EFFECTIVENESS  
OF THE ROLLING THUNDER PROGRAM  
IN NORTH VIETNAM\*  
1 JANUARY-30 SEPTEMBER 1966

The Rolling Thunder air offensive against North Vietnam has been accelerated sharply in 1966, compared with operations in 1965. The 59,000 attack sorties flown in the first nine months of 1966 against targets in North Vietnam were about 2.3 times the 1965 effort; the 90,000 tons of ordnance dropped was 2.6 times the ordnance delivered on targets in 1965. The 1966 air operations have also been carried out more efficiently than the 1965 campaign. The average bomb load per attack sortie has increased, and the rate of aircraft losses has been some 58 percent of the 1965 rate.

In spite of these improvements, it is estimated that the cost effectiveness of the air campaign diminished in 1966. The direct operating cost of inflicting a dollar's worth of damage in North Vietnam has increased by about 28 percent -- from an estimated \$6.80 in 1965 to about \$8.70 in 1966. The major determinants of this decrease in cost effectiveness have been the far greater proportion of attack sorties accounted for by armed reconnaissance strikes (as opposed to initial strikes on fixed targets) and the geographic concentration of the air effort against logistic targets in the southern areas of North Vietnam, principally Military Region IV.

By the end of 1965, a growing scarcity of fruitful fixed targets outside of sanctuary areas, as well as other operational restrictions virtually forced a continually increasing emphasis on armed reconnaissance. This trend was temporarily interrupted by the strikes against major petroleum storage installations, which began late in June 1966. Strike sorties against JCS fixed-target systems dropped from more than 30 percent of

\* This memorandum was produced by CIA. Aside from the normal substantive exchange with other agencies at the working level, this memorandum has not been coordinated outside CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Research and Reports and was coordinated with the Office of National Estimates, the Office of Current Intelligence, and the Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs; the estimates and conclusions represent the best judgment of the Directorate of Intelligence as of 3 November 1966.

the total sorties flown in 1965 to less than 3 percent in 1966. Armed reconnaissance sorties increased by over 230 percent, from about 17,300 sorties in 1965 to 57,300 in 1966. Almost two-thirds of these -- 37,000 sorties -- were directed at the southernmost areas of North Vietnam, the Panhandle section south of Vinh.

The air campaign over Laos shows similar emphasis on the attempted interdiction of the infiltration network into South Vietnam. Attack sorties flown under the Barrel Roll and Steel Tiger programs increased from 11,000 sorties in 1965 to about 38,000 during the first nine months of 1966. Ninety-five percent of the attack sorties flown in Laos in 1966 were on armed reconnaissance missions.

The major measurable effects on North Vietnam of Rolling Thunder attacks are:

- (1) About 20 percent, or 70,000, of the total military forces are engaged directly in defensive programs and countermeasures against the Rolling Thunder program. About 220,000 full-time and 100,000 part-time workers have been diverted to repair, reconstruction, and dispersal programs in North Vietnam and Laos. In 1965 and 1966, from 25,000 to 35,000 persons are tentatively estimated to have been casualties of air attacks in the North.

- (2) Physical damage to economic and military targets has also increased. This damage amounted to \$65 million in 1965 and an additional \$95 million in the first nine months of 1966. Of the latter total, over 70 percent represented damage to economic targets.

Despite the increased weight of air attack, North Vietnam continues to increase its support to the insurgency in South Vietnam. The Rolling Thunder program has not been able to prevent about a threefold increase in the level of personnel infiltration in 1966. The external logistic support needed to maintain the expanded VC/NVA force in South Vietnam has been adequate. In particular, despite the neutralization of the major petroleum storage facilities in the North, petroleum supplies have continued to be imported in needed amounts.

Taking a broader view, during the course of the Rolling Thunder program the North Vietnamese capability to support the war effort has improved.



(1) The capacity of the transportation system, at least as it affects the ability to handle the flow of men and military supplies to South Vietnam, has been increased.

(2) The sizable manpower drain has peaked, unless there is a sharp increase in estimated VC/NVA manpower losses in South Vietnam or a radical change in the nature of the air campaign against North Vietnam. In 1965 and 1966, North Vietnam had to mobilize 80 percent of its physically fit males as they reached draft age. Subject to the assumptions just delineated, this levy could be as low as 50 percent of the 1967 class.

(3) Aid from the USSR and Communist China received in 1965 and 1966 has amounted, in estimated value, to about five times the total damage caused by Rolling Thunder attacks.

The fact that a large share of the imports now flowing into North Vietnam is not military aid but machinery and equipment seems particularly significant. On the one hand, it reflects a willingness of the major Communist powers to provide additional equipment for war-related industrial facilities, probably encouraged by the fact that the modern industrial sector of the North Vietnamese economy has been largely off-limits to air attack. On the other hand, it suggests that adequate reserves of skilled manpower, electric generating capacity, and other essential inputs are available on a significant scale for conversion to a war-supporting role. While this new emphasis accelerates the ability to support military operations in the short run, it does postpone Hanoi's long-run plans for the development of heavy industry.

Nor has Rolling Thunder served visibly to reduce the determination of Hanoi to continue the war. We see no signs that the air attack has shaken the confidence of the regime, and with increased Soviet and Chinese aid to bolster its capabilities, North Vietnam in the short term, at least, will apparently take no positive step toward a negotiated settlement. In any event, it is estimated that Hanoi will continue to be insistent on a cessation of the bombings as a prerequisite for negotiations. Analysis of popular attitudes in North Vietnam indicates a continued firmness in support of the regime's policies. Although the long-term effects of the war may have some wearying effect on the population, there is no evidence

that it has yet reached a point sufficient to deter Hanoi's leaders from their present policies.

Finally, the course of the air campaign in 1966 has had no significant effect on the attitudes of third countries. From the resumption of the bombings in January 1966 to the escalation represented by the bombing of the petroleum storage facilities, third-country attitudes have been, predictably, relatively constant. The unyielding attitude of the North Vietnamese, particularly during the January bombing pause, has had a somewhat sobering impact on some third countries. Indeed, the escalation against POL storage facilities produced a reaction more restrained and less critical than had been anticipated. Among Communist third countries, the USSR and the Eastern European countries would prefer a negotiated settlement because they regard a continuation of the war as potentially dangerous to themselves and in any case as posing an awkward dilemma for them within the Communist world. The Chinese Communists, however, remain adamant in their attitudes toward the war and any steps leading toward a negotiated settlement.

Over and above the measurable effects discussed in the foregoing, the Rolling Thunder program has certain intangible aspects such as enemy morale and determination which are much more difficult to assess. The Rolling Thunder program has been the object of much neutralist criticism and the target of a concerted Communist diplomatic and propaganda campaign. In one sense, this must serve to stiffen Hanoi's back; at the same time, the program has become one way Hanoi probably measures US determination -- though the extent of US commitment on the ground conveys this determination far more persuasively. Moreover, the Rolling Thunder operation carries some threat of further escalation, and in this way may exert a certain worrisome pressure on Hanoi. On the other hand, if Rolling Thunder were to be terminated at this point without concessions, the United States would be deprived of one form of leverage against Hanoi which it now has.

I. The Rolling Thunder Attack in January-September 1966

A. Scale of Operations

During the first nine months of 1966, US/GVN forces flew nearly 59,500 attack sorties against North Vietnam.\* Of this total, the United States flew 58,700 sorties and the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) the remaining 800. The combined effort represents an increase of approximately 130 percent over the nearly 26,000 attack sorties flown against North Vietnam in all of 1965. As shown in Table 1, the air attack on North Vietnam in 1966 represents a larger share of the total attack in Southeast Asia than it did in 1965. The number of attack sorties flown in South Vietnam, on the other hand, represents a smaller share of the total number of attack sorties in Southeast Asia in 1966 than it did in 1965.

Attack sorties specifically flown as initial strikes or restrikes on fixed targets from the target list of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) have become very rare. In 1965, such sorties accounted for nearly 30 percent of all attack sorties flown against North Vietnam, and armed reconnaissance sorties accounted for approximately 70 percent. In 1966 the share of fixed target attack sorties not involving any armed reconnaissance had shrunk to 0.6 percent, with armed reconnaissance sorties accounting for 99.4 percent. This change was a continuation of a trend already under way in the latter months of 1965, when, in comparison with previous levels, fixed target sorties declined both absolutely and as a share of the total attack on North Vietnam. The decline undoubtedly reflects the diminishing number of new fixed targets available for attack, broadened authorization for armed reconnaissance, and, at least in part, a change in definitions used. Restrikes on JCS fixed targets were also carried out by armed reconnaissance sorties. Including these restrikes on armed reconnaissance, about 1,600 sorties, or somewhat less than 3 percent of the total number of attack sorties on North Vietnam, were directed against JCS targets.

B. Ordnance

During the first nine months of 1966, approximately 90,000 tons of ordnance were delivered on North Vietnam, or about 2.6 times the

\* Attack sorties include: strike, flak suppression, armed reconnaissance, and air interdiction.

Table 1

Attack Sorties by US/GVN Forces in Southeast Asia  
During 1965 and January-September 1966

Area	Force	1965		January-September 1966	
		Number of Sorties	Percent	Number of Sorties	Percent
North Vietnam		<u>25,890</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>59,494</u>	<u>28</u>
	US VNAF	25,276 614		58,696 798	
South Vietnam		<u>96,549</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>121,388</u>	<u>55</u>
	US VNAF	73,412 23,137		97,299 24,089	
Laos	US	<u>10,819</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>38,291</u>	<u>17</u>
All areas of operation		<u>133,258</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>219,173</u>	<u>100</u>
	US VNAF	109,507 23,751		194,286 24,887	

tonnage delivered in 1965. The amounts delivered on North Vietnam during the early months of the year were much smaller than in the later months. The total for the three-month period January-March was only 12,795 tons, whereas 16,342 tons were delivered in July and 17,333 tons in August. The amount delivered in August was equal to approximately 50 percent of the total delivered on North Vietnam in 1965.

The total ordnance tonnage delivered by air in Southeast Asia, however, has remained fairly constant throughout the year. It was a little over 38,000 tons in January and had increased to over 44,000 by August. As indicated in Table 2, during the early months of the year, when the tonnage delivered on North Vietnam was small, the tonnage delivered on Laos was relatively large. In the spring and summer the tonnages delivered on Laos decreased as the tonnages delivered on North Vietnam increased. Deliveries on targets in South Vietnam have remained relatively constant.

Table 2

Ordnance Delivered by Air in Southeast Asia  
January-August 1966

<u>Month</u>	<u>Country</u>			<u>Tons</u>
	<u>North Vietnam</u>	<u>Laos</u>	<u>South Vietnam</u>	<u>Total</u>
January	273	13,918	23,869	38,060
February	4,780	10,878	21,783	37,441
March	7,742	8,983	24,093	40,818
April	9,037	9,287	18,921	37,245
May	7,556	7,126	18,080	32,762
June	10,963	4,519	19,025	34,507
July	16,342	2,358	23,182	41,882
August	17,333	1,435	25,590	44,358
Total	<u>74,026</u>	<u>58,504</u>	<u>174,543</u>	<u>307,073</u>

During the first nine months of 1966 the average ordnance load per attack sortie against North Vietnam was a little more than 1.5 tons per sortie -- a slight increase over the 1.4 tons per sortie averaged in 1965. In July 1966 the average load was 1.9 tons, approximately the same as the average load per bomber sortie flown by US Air Forces against Germany in World War II. In August 1966 the average load per attack sortie flown against North Vietnam was 1.6 tons.

### C. Aircraft Losses

A total of 228 planes, including support as well as attack aircraft, were lost during the nine-month period January-September 1966. All were US aircraft. The ratio of total losses to attack sorties was about 0.38 percent in 1966, compared with a ratio of approximately 0.65 percent in 1965. This is equal to an average loss of a little more than 3.8 aircraft per 1,000 attack sorties in 1966, compared with a loss of 6.5 aircraft per 1,000 attack sorties in 1965. Losses, by model, of fixed-wing aircraft in 1965 and 1966 are compared in Table 3. Losses as a percent of total sorties flown by models of aircraft most used either remained the same or declined.

Table 3

Losses by Model of Fixed-Wing Aircraft  
During 1965 and January-September 1966

Aircraft Model	Losses in March-December 1965		Losses in January-September 1966	
	Number	As Percent of Sorties Flown	Number	As Percent of Sorties Flown
F-105	54	0.6	96	0.6
A-4	29	0.3	35	0.2
F-4	19	0.3	25	0.1
A-1	26	0.7	17	0.1
F-8	15	0.4	12	0.4
RF-101	6	2.1	11	0.5
A-6	3	0.6	7	0.6
RF-8	6	1.7	6	1.4
F-104	0	0	5	0.3
RF-4	0	0	4	0.2
F-100	5	1.2	1	0.3
RA-3	0	0	1	0.9
RA-5	3	2.3	1	0.1
C-130	0	0	1	0.2
RB-66	0	0	1	Insig.
EB-66	0	0	1	Insig.
RC-130	0	0	1	4.0
EF-10	0	0	1	0.1
RC-47	0	0	1	11.1
EA-1	1	0.1	0	0
B-57	1	0.7	1	0.2
Total	<u>168</u>		<u>228</u>	

D. Cost Effectiveness of Operations Against North Vietnam  
in 1966

The value of the aircraft lost on sorties against North Vietnam in 1966 may be estimated at about \$480 million, on the basis of average costs for production models of the types of aircraft lost. A preliminary estimate of the sortie overhead costs for the attack sorties and for the accompanying support sorties is about \$200 million. If the ordnance mix in 1966 was about the same as in 1965, the cost of the ordnance delivered by sorties against North Vietnam in 1966 may have been in the

neighborhood of \$150 million. On this basis, the direct operating cost (excluding manpower losses) of the aerial attack on North Vietnam during the first nine months of 1966 may be estimated at about \$830 million, as follows:

	<u>Million US \$</u>
Aircraft losses	480
Sortie overhead costs	200
Ordnance costs	150
Total	<u>830</u>

A preliminary estimate of the damage done to North Vietnam by the aerial attack is about \$95 million. Thus the cost of one dollar's worth of damage to the DRV may be estimated at roughly \$8.70. This is an increase of about 28 percent above the estimated cost of \$6.80 per dollar's worth of damage in 1965. The increase in cost per unit of damage has been caused by loss of planes of more expensive models, by the increased sortie overhead costs resulting from flying a larger number of sorties, and by the fact that many of the most attractive targets were destroyed in 1965.

## II. Target Systems Attacked in January-September 1966

### A. Fixed Targets

#### 1. General

The Rolling Thunder attacks during January-September 1966 continued trends that were well defined by the last quarter of 1965. The growing scarcity of fruitful fixed targets which were eligible for attack by the criteria of Rolling Thunder forced a continually increasing emphasis on armed reconnaissance missions and a consequent decline in the number of fixed target strikes. Although 125 fixed targets were struck in 1965, most of the 1966 counterpart effort was in restrikes of these targets. Only 25 new fixed targets were struck in the first nine months of 1966 (see Table 4). Attack sorties flown against JCS fixed target systems dropped dramatically in 1966, compared with 1965. In 1965, about 30 percent of total attack sorties were flown specifically as fixed-target sorties. In 1966, including both fixed-target sorties and restrikes of fixed targets on armed reconnaissance sorties, only somewhat less than 3 percent of total attack sorties were directed against JCS fixed targets. (See Table 5.) Nevertheless, the effectiveness of fixed-target strike attacks, measured in terms of damage costs, more than doubled. Damage directly attributable to airstrikes on fixed targets rose from \$5,000 per sortie in 1965 to \$11,000 per sortie in 1966. The principal cause of this rise undoubtedly is the concentration of the attack effort on high cost target systems such as powerplants, bridges, and POL storage areas. Strikes on these three target systems accounted for over 60 percent of the fixed target program thus far in 1966, whereas they comprised only 24 percent of the effort in 1965. Other factors, such as the reduction in average strike size, may have contributed to the rise in fixed-target strike effectiveness, but it is apparent that target selection is the key element.

Strikes on military installations included in the JCS fixed-target system accounted for only 40 percent of the total fixed-target strike sorties in 1966. The major portion of this program consisted of restrikes on targets already hit in 1965, and, in general, these attacks produced damage of lower economic cost than those directed against industrial targets.

#### 2. Electric Power Targets

Despite the destruction of about one-third of North Vietnam's electric power industry by US airstrikes, the loss is not yet large enough to have an important impact on the economy. The effectiveness of the strikes has been reduced by carrying out strikes against targets of small economic significance.



Table 4

Comparison of Rolling Thunder Strikes  
on Major Fixed-Target Systems:  
1965 and January-September 1966

<u>JCS Fixed Target System</u>	<u>Number of Targets Struck</u>			
	<u>Number Targeted</u>	<u>Struck 1965</u>	<u>Restruck Jan-Sept 1966</u>	<u>New Strikes Jan-Sept 1966</u>
Barracks/supply depots/ ammunition depots	106	64	46	11
POL storage	13	4	4	7
Powerplants	20	6	6	1
Manufacturing and explosives plants	1	1	0	0
Airfields	11	4	3	0
Bridges	61	44	42	6
Radar and communications installations	5	2	0	0
Total	<u>217</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>25</u>

US airstrikes against North Vietnamese powerplants have resulted in the neutralization of an estimated 59,000 kilowatts (kw), or 32 percent, of a total installed generating capacity of 187,000 kw. The total cost of damage inflicted is estimated to be \$11.5 million. During 1965 there was a total of 21 strikes and restrikes against six Vietnamese powerplants. The cost of damage inflicted is estimated to be about \$6.3 million, and the total capacity put out of service amounted to 47,000 kw, of which 24,000 kw was put back into service by March 1966. During 1966 there was a total of 12 strikes and restrikes against five powerplants. The cost of damage in 1966 is estimated to be about \$5.2 million, and the amount of capacity neutralized was about 12,000 kw, plus another 24,000 kw of capacity destroyed that probably would have gone into service during 1966. The following tabulation presents details of the air strikes during 1966:

<u>Powerplant</u>	<u>Date of Air Strikes</u>	<u>Estimated Cost of Damage (Million US \$)</u>	<u>Capacity Out of Service</u>	
	18 Apr 66	Negl.	24,000 kw. Put back in service July 1966.	25X5
	28 Apr 66	Negl.	No known additional damage.	
	11 Aug 66	4.4	24,000 kw put back in service was again neutralized; 24,000 kw being installed was also neutralized.	
	14 Aug 66	Negl.		
	17 Aug 66	Negl.		
	Between 6-8 Jul 66	0.8	12,000 kw out of 24,000 kw put out of service.	
	Prior to 19 Jul 66	Negl.	Probably not out of service more than a few days.	
	22 Sep 66	N.A.	Restoration under way	
	23 Sep 66	N.A.	but estimated not to	
	23 Sep 66	N.A.	have operated since summer 1965.	
	23 Oct 66	N.A.	Restoration under way	
	26 Oct 66	N.A.	but estimated not to have operated since summer 1965.	

During 1966, most of the strikes (7 out of 12) took place in the northern part of the country, while the majority of the strikes (17 out of 21) during 1965 occurred in the south. Two single strikes against the Thai Nguyen and Viet Tri powerplants and five restrikes against the Uong Bi powerplant all were in the north. The remaining missions were accounted for by five restrikes against the Ben Thuy and Thanh Hoa powerplants in the south, both of which were initially put out of operation in the summer of 1965.

The 11 August 1966 strike against the Uong Bi powerplant rates as the most effective single strike against a North Vietnamese powerplant, severely damaging and putting out of service 24,000 kw that had been in service and another 24,000 kw that was almost ready for operation. Total cost of damage resulting from this strike alone was about \$4.4 million. Loss of the plant denies North Vietnam the use of its largest and most efficient powerplant for at least one year.

Table 5

Comparison of Rolling Thunder Strike Sorties  
on Major Fixed-Target Systems:  
1965 and January-September 1966

	Ordnance in Tons		
<u>JCS Fixed-Target System</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>Jan-Sept 1966</u>	<u>Total</u>
Barracks/supply depots/ ammunition depots			
Sorties	4,291	272	4,563
Ordnance	7,299	337	7,636
POL storage			
Sorties	128	400	528
Ordnance	120	480	600
Powerplants			
Sorties	229	50	279
Ordnance	370	47	417
Manufacturing and explosives plants			
Sorties	28	N.A.	28
Ordnance	90	N.A.	90
Airfields			
Sorties	421	91	512
Ordnance	330	85	415
Bridges			
Sorties	1,713	565	2,278
Ordnance	3,198	856	4,054
Radar and Communications installations			
Sorties	15	N.A.	15
Ordnance	20	N.A.	20
Naval bases, railroad yards, and ports			
Sorties	1,875	222	2,097
Ordnance	1,373	327	1,700
Total			
Sorties	8,700	1,600	10,300
Ordnance	12,800	2,132	14,932

Airstrikes against powerplants during 1966 generally appear to be more effective than in 1965. In terms of capacity put out of operation, each strike averaged some 2,240 kw in 1965 compared with only 1,000 kw in 1966. In value terms, the cost of damage averaged about \$300,000 for each strike in 1965 and \$430,000 in 1966. However, if the strikes for both years are weighed in terms of long-range effectiveness, the above comparisons are misleading. Accounting of the damage to the Uong Bi powerplant makes a significant difference. If all the capacity put out of operation at Uong Bi is counted in 1966, including the amount being installed which was destroyed, then average capacity put out of operation per strike in 1965 amounts to 1,095 kw, as against 5,000 kw per strike in 1966. The comparison in value terms would not change.

### 3. Petroleum Storage Targets

US airstrikes against JCS-designated petroleum storage target systems have destroyed almost 80 percent of the pre-strike capacity of 129,110 tons. Almost three-fourths of this destruction was achieved during 1966 when 59 air strikes were flown against petroleum storage targets, compared with only 9 strikes in 1965. The following tabulation summarizes the air campaign against petroleum storage targets during 1965:

<u>JCS</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Capacity 1965</u>		<u>Number of Strikes</u>
		<u>Beginning</u>	<u>End</u>	
	Phu Van	840	0	1
	Vinh	8,000	1,180	5
	Nam Dinh	11,020	0	2
	Phu Qui	7,560	0	1
Total		<u>27,420</u>	<u>1,180</u>	<u>9</u>

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Destruction of JCS petroleum storage targets during the first nine months of 1966 was as follows:

<u>JCS</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Capacity <sup>a/</sup></u>		<u>Number of Strikes</u>
		<u>28 June</u>	<u>25 October</u>	
	Phu Van <u>b/</u>	0	0	0
	Haiphong	40,620	4,330	3
	Hanoi	30,620	0	1
	Vinh	1,180	1,180	12
	Nguyen Khe	7,500	6,680	10
	Ha Gia (Phuc Yen) <u>b/</u>	9,910	9,910	0
	Bac Giang	2,260	1,560	4
	Nam Dinh <u>b/</u>	0	0	0
	Do Son	2,860	1,430	14
	Viet Tri	1,400	40	8
	Phu Qui <u>b/</u>	0	0	0
	Duong Mham	4,130	0	7
	Can Thon (Kep) <u>b/</u>	1,210	1,210	0
	Total	<u>101,690</u>	<u>26,340</u>	<u>59</u>

25X5

- a. Tons of average petroleum.  
b. Not struck to date in 1966.

The effects of neutralizing most of the major petroleum storage facilities have been largely offset by the development of an elaborate system of resupply and dispersed storage sites. The North Vietnamese have been able to maintain petroleum imports at almost normal levels by a combination of movement of petroleum overland from China, the lightering of 10,000-ton Soviet tankers, and, more recently, the use of small 4,000-ton Soviet tankers delivering petroleum from the Soviet Far East.

Difficulties in distributing petroleum internally have been noted, but they do not appear to be sufficient to cause other than highly local transportation difficulties or to interfere with the logistic resupply of the Communist forces in South Vietnam.

#### 4. Lines of Communications

##### a. North Vietnam

The rail lines, highways, and waterways of North Vietnam were hit continually from January through September 1966, with emphasis primarily on the same areas that were struck in 1965. Of the 355 bridges confirmed by aerial photography to have been struck since the start of bombing, about 140 were targets struck for the first time in 1966. All lines of communications (LOC's) were hit with greater intensity during 1966, but the only new LOC's taken under attack were the roads developed as alternates to routes bombed in 1965.

Airstrikes against JCS-targeted bridges, like strikes against all bridges in North Vietnam, have been concentrated in the southern part of the country. The number of strikes against highway bridges on the JCS target list decreased during 1966, whereas strikes against JCS bridges on the rail lines increased as shown in Table 6.

##### (1) Railroads

In spite of the increase in airstrikes against the rail lines in 1966, there has been no significant increase in the total length of time the rail lines have been interdicted for through rail service during the year as shown in Table 7. Aerial photography confirmed that a total of 82 railroad and combination rail/highway bridges were damaged or destroyed on all rail lines in North Vietnam since the start of the bombing. This figure represents 28 percent of all rail bridges in the country, half of which were destroyed or damaged from January through September 1966. Table 8 shows a comparison of data by individual line. The Hanoi - Dong Dang and Hanoi - Haiphong lines, the two most important lines for the movement of both imports and domestic goods, have been interdicted for a total of only about two months and one month, respectively, during 1966. The average volume of traffic moved on these two lines could easily have been equal to that moved in 1965 because the lines are normally used below maximum capacity, thus traffic backlogged during periods of interdiction could have been moved while the lines were open. Two additional

bridges were struck on the Dong Dang line during 1966 bringing the total on this line to four bridges, all located approximately midway between Hanoi and the China border. No additional bridges were struck on the Haiphong line.

Table 6

North Vietnam: Airstrikes Against JCS Targeted Bridges  
1965 and January-September 1966

<u>Type and Location</u>	<u>Number of JCS Targeted Bridges Struck</u>		<u>Number of Strikes <sup>a/</sup></u>	
	<u>1965</u>	<u>Jan-Sep 1966 <sup>b/</sup></u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>Jan-Sep 1966</u>
Railroad and railroad/ highway	<u>16</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>96</u>
Hanoi - Dong Dang line	3	3	6	14
Hanoi - Lao Cai line	1	2	7	9
Hanoi - Haiphong line	2	1	5	5
Hanoi - south <sup>c/</sup>	10	10	49	68
Highway	<u>31</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>37</u>
21° to 23°	12	7	28	12
19° to 21°	3	1	5	1
17° to 19°	16	8	44	24
Total	<u>47</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>144</u>	<u>133</u>

a. Including restrikes against JCS bridges.

b. Including JCS bridges initially struck in 1965.

c. Including the Hanoi-Vinh line and the makeshift line south of Vinh.

Table 7

North Vietnam:  
Estimated Total Length of Time Railroad Lines were Interdicted  
for Through Rail Service  
1965 and January-September 1966

<u>Railroad Line</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>Jan-Sep 1966</u>
Hanoi - Dong Dang	1 month	2 months
Hanoi - Haiphong	1 week	1 month
Hanoi - Lao Cai	5 months	5 months
Hanoi - Vinh	9 months	8 months
Hanoi - Thai Nguyen	Negl.	Negl.

Table 8

Railroad Bridges Destroyed or Damaged, by Line  
1965 Through 30 September 1966

<u>Railroad Line</u>	<u>Total Bridges on Line</u>	<u>Percent Destroyed/Damaged in 1965</u>	<u>Percent Destroyed/Damaged in 1965 and 1966 Through Sep 30</u>
Hanoi - Lao Cai	139	8	12
Hanoi - Dong Dang	53	4	8
Hanoi - Haiphong	10	20	20
Hanoi - Dong Hoi	85	32	69
Hanoi - Thai Nguyen	7	0	14
Total	<u>294</u>		
Average		14	28



The Hanoi - Lao Cai line has been interdicted for through service for almost 60 percent of 1966, compared with about 40 percent of 1965. The Hanoi - Vinh line has been disrupted for through rail service almost continually since it was first struck in April 1965, except during the cessation of bombing in January 1966. Four of the major bridges destroyed on this line during 1965 have bypass bridges in place and shuttling operations under way. At least 32 additional railroad and combination bridges have been struck on this line in 1966.

## (2) Highways

The most significant hindrance to highway traffic has resulted from strikes against routes in the southern part of North Vietnam. Strikes against the central and northern parts of the country have resulted in only minor disruptions of truck service. Route 1A, running along the coast to the DMZ, has been subjected to the most bombing, but apparently also continues to be the most heavily used road in the south. Other north-south routes, such as routes 15 and 101, have been used primarily as supplements or as alternates when portions of route 1A were interdicted. Aerial photography has confirmed the destruction or damage of about 100 additional highway bridges, primarily in the south, in 1966, for a total of 273 highway bridges struck since the start of the bombing. In addition, roadbeds have been cratered at chokepoints, and alternate routes have been bombed. The southernmost motorable road crossing into Laos west of Dong Hoi, completed in April, also has been heavily bombed. The significantly higher level of reported destruction and damage of trucks in the south during 1966, shown in Table 9, has added greatly to the problem of moving supplies south. In spite of these heavy losses, there have been no indications of serious shortages of supplies resulting from either the loss of trucks or of lowered road capacities.

## (3) Waterways

The most significant change in the movement of supplies to the south thus far in 1966 has been the increased emphasis on the use of inland and coastal waterways. Airstrikes against the waterways followed the same pattern during 1966 as in 1965, with attacks primarily against watercraft, port areas, and other cargo-handling facilities. No significant damage to the water LOC's has resulted from the numerous strikes against the ports and transshipment facilities in southern North Vietnam. Dredging of waterways, an annual project for the North Vietnamese, probably increased during 1966 in the south. Airstrikes against watercraft probably have been more important in hindering water shipments than strikes against facilities. The number

of watercraft reported destroyed and damaged in 1966 increased nearly five-fold over 1965. The number of watercraft used in the southern area apparently has not decreased, however.

Table 9

Reported Losses of Transport Equipment Due to Bombing in North Vietnam a/  
1965 and January-September 1966

	<u>1965</u>		<u>Jan-Sep 1966</u>	
	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
Vessels	460	750	2,700	4,350
Trucks <u>b/</u>	320	480	1,600	1,500
Railroad freight cars <u>c/</u>	230	590	1,060	870
Locomotives	6	6	10	13

a. These data are basically those from pilot reports but adjusted downward to eliminate some duplication. Data probably include some exaggeration.

b. Additional trucks were destroyed and damaged in Laos, resulting in effective losses of about 1,000 trucks from the inventory.

c. Including small makeshift railroad cars used on the line south of Hanoi. This type of car is not included in the inventory of mainline freight cars.

b. Laos

Air operations against lines of communications have been concentrated in the north-central and Panhandle areas of Communist-held Laos. The roads and river crossings in the Panhandle were hardest hit in 1966, with about 70 percent of the sorties flown in this region. Strikes have been carried out against bridges, fords, ferries, and choke-points. Some 38,000 sorties, primarily armed reconnaissance, were flown against LOC's and fixed targets located in the north central area and the Panhandle during the first nine months of 1966. Air attacks were heaviest during the dry season, when an average of about 1,300 sorties were flown per week. The level of sorties dropped to an average of about 150 per week during the rainy season, which started

in June. Pilots reported the following damage to LOC's in Laos for the period from 1 April through 30 September 1966:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Bridges</u>	<u>Road Cuts</u>	<u>Fords and Ferries</u>
North Central (Barrel Roll)	13	99	2
Panhandle (Steel Tiger/ Tiger Hound)	173	1,071	114

Aerial photography since January 1966 has confirmed that seven bridges in the north-central region and 57 bridges in the Panhandle, most of which are on fordable streams, were heavily damaged or destroyed. It is estimated that about 1,000 trucks have been destroyed on roads in the Panhandle since the start of bombing in southern Laos.

B. Targets of Opportunity (Armed Reconnaissance Missions)

A total of 57,300 armed reconnaissance sorties were flown in the first nine months of 1966, compared with 17,300 sorties in 1965. This increase of about 230 percent reflects not only the scarcity of authorized fixed targets but also the increasing concern with infiltration of men and supplies into South Vietnam. The latter concern is apparent in the fact that almost two-thirds of the armed reconnaissance sorties were directed against targets in the southernmost areas of North Vietnam, the Panhandle section south of Vinh.

The rise in damage effectiveness for armed reconnaissance sorties -- from \$600 per sortie in 1965 to \$900 per sortie in 1966 -- is principally attributable to the concentration of attack on transportation facilities south of Vinh and their systematic destruction. There are, however, two other factors that contribute to the rise in damage per sortie, neither of which is a truly sound comparable indicator of mission effectiveness. The first of these is the inclusion of damage inflicted on naval craft -- a figure unavailable and thus excluded from the assessment of strikes made in 1965. The second is represented by the downing of North Vietnamese interceptor aircraft by Rolling Thunder missions. The cost of these aircraft and the number downed is not related to the number of Rolling Thunder sorties flown, and the disproportionate rise in dollar replacement cost to North Vietnam should therefore be taken into account when measuring effectiveness of the Rolling Thunder program.

### C. Laos Air Operations

Approximately 38,000 attack sorties were flown under the Barrel Roll and Steel Tiger programs against the north-central and Panhandle areas of Communist-held Laos during the first nine months of 1966. This air effort shows a marked increase over nearly 11,000 attack sorties flown in similar missions during 1965. Of the attack sorties flown over Laos during January-September of this year, 95 percent were on armed reconnaissance missions. About 70 percent of the attack missions struck targets of opportunity within the Steel Tiger area of operations; the other 30 percent performed similar tasks within the Barrel Roll area.

The intensity of the current air war over Laos is varied to meet fluctuations in weather and the level of enemy truck traffic and infiltration. During 1966, monthly attack sorties over Laos ranged from 8,000 in January (dry season) to 800 in August (wet season). Air-strikes were heavily directed against trucks, bridges, fords, ferries, and road chokepoints. It is estimated that during 1966, air attacks in Laos have inflicted at least \$5 million damage against the Communist forces. The bulk of this damage, primarily accounted for by truck and bridge destruction, was inflicted in the Steel Tiger area of operation.

### III. The Effects of the Rolling Thunder Program in 1966

#### A. Physical Damage

Attack sorties flown by the Rolling Thunder program increased approximately 130 percent during the first nine months of 1966, compared with all of 1965, but the value of physical damage increased by only about 45 percent. A comparison of total measurable damage to economic and military target systems for 1965 and January-September 1966 is as follows:

	Million US \$	
	<u>1965</u>	<u>January-September 1966</u>
Economic targets	34.8	67.2
Military targets	30.4	28.0
Total	<u>65.2</u>	<u>95.2</u>

Damage to military targets, which accounted for 47 percent of the total damage in 1965, accounted for less than 30 percent in 1966. By far the greatest share of damage to military targets was inflicted on aircraft and naval craft, which accounted for 90 percent of the total military damage in 1966. No estimates of damage to naval craft are available for 1965; damage to aircraft in that year accounted for only 10 percent of total damage to military targets.

The major changes in damages inflicted on economic target systems in 1966 as compared with 1965 were the sharp increases in the destruction or damage sustained by transport equipment and the indirect losses of exports and agricultural crops which are attributable to the bombings. Losses in transport equipment jumped from US \$6 million in 1965 to \$24.5 million in 1966. Indirect losses of agricultural crops and export earnings almost tripled -- from \$9.2 million in 1965 to \$25.4 million in 1966.

The air attack in 1966 shows some general correlation between the increase in attack sorties and the level of physical damage. Thus, the months of July, August, and September accounted for almost one-half -- 47 percent -- of the total damage sustained by

economic targets. During the same period the air attack accounted for almost 58 percent of the sorties flown to date in 1966. Military damage has remained at relatively low levels during 1966 except during the last four months, when increasing losses of aircraft and naval craft have been sustained. The cumulative effects, by economic sector, of the Rolling Thunder program are discussed in Part IV of this memorandum. The overall effect has been to inflict increasing damage to the transportation system and to cause extensive distribution problems, most notably in petroleum distribution. The airstrikes have continued to depress economic growth and to cause the abandonment of some plans for economic development. Nevertheless, essential economic activities continue; most transportation routes remain open. The level of damage has not been sufficient to cause any sector of the economy to collapse. Nor has popular support of the war been significantly diminished. Hanoi's support of its military activities in South Vietnam has been made more costly and burdensome but has not been reduced below the levels required to continue military operations at the levels maintained throughout most of 1966.

B. Casualties in 1966

All estimates of casualties from bombing North Vietnam are subject to an unknown and conceivably large margin of error because of the questionable validity of the assumptions and estimates used in the calculations. Information emanating from Hanoi is of little value in estimating casualties, with propaganda pronouncements continuing to be directed to the large but usually unspecified numbers of casualties inflicted from the bombing of schools and hospitals. The few numerical reports of civilian casualties produced by Hanoi have been notable for the relatively insignificant quantities shown. By all yardsticks of measurement, however, we conclude that casualties from US/GVN bombing attacks are not a major effect of the air war, in the sense that this number is probably relatively small. Our estimate of 16,000 to 21,000 casualties for the first nine months of 1966 is considered to be preliminary.

## 2. Estimated Casualties from Strikes Against Fixed Targets

A recent comprehensive study of civilian casualties in 90 JCS-targeted areas, both urban and rural, carried out by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), based on photography and demographic statistics for the targeted areas, indicated that a minimum of some 500 civilian casualties were inflicted by some 525 strikes. The minimum estimate, equating to about one civilian casualty per strike, presumes adequate warning for the personnel in the targeted areas. If the personnel received no warning, casualties could be as high as ten times the minimum estimate, the DIA study concluded. For the purposes of our current estimate, the method derived from the Nam Dinh case study was used for urban areas. The conclusion of the Nam Dinh analysis was that casualties ranged from 1 per 12,000 of population to 1 per 18,000 of population. For rural areas a minimum ratio of 0.7 casualties per strike (and a maximum of 7.0 casualties per strike) was implied by the DIA study. For the purpose of estimating casualties against fixed targets in rural areas, the mean of 3.8 casualties per strike has been used in our current estimate.

The application of the Nam Dinh example to 1966 strikes against JCS targets in urban areas yields a total estimate of 200 civilian casualties. If it is assumed that the rural population near JCS fixed targets has less access to sophisticated air raid warning systems and that therefore casualties per average strike are more likely to be close to the 3.8 average between the minimum (0.7) and maximum (7.0) suggested by the DIA photographic study, total civilian casualties from the 218 airstrikes against fixed targets in rural areas in the first nine months of 1966 probably amounted to about 800. The combined nine month 1966 total estimate is that civilian casualties from attacks against JCS fixed targets in 1966 to date have not exceeded 1,000.

Military casualties in fixed target areas in the first nine months of 1966 are estimated to have been negligible.

3. Estimated Casualties from Armed Reconnaissance

Comparative analysis of weapons effectiveness and civilian population density supplied by DIA for our first casualty study resulted in a ratio of 0.17 casualties per sortie. In January-September 1966 there were a total of some 57,000 armed reconnaissance attack sorties (excluding those against fixed targets), yielding an estimate of some 10,000 to 15,000 total civilian casualties from armed reconnaissance in the first nine months of 1966, compared with some 4,000 in 1965.

One casualty is normally assigned by DIA for each truck or watercraft damaged or destroyed and 0.01 casualty for each railroad car or locomotive damaged or destroyed. Since some 10,000 motor trucks and watercraft have been reported damaged or destroyed during the first nine months of 1966, casualties of 10,000 are indicated. It is estimated, however, that at least half of these vehicles are operated by civilians whose casualties as a consequence of armed reconnaissance have already been estimated above. The total derived from this method has therefore been reduced to 5,000 and is regarded to comprise only military personnel. Estimates for the first nine months of 1966 are as follows:

	<u>Casualties</u>
Civilian	
Attacks against fixed targets	1,000
Armed reconnaissance	10,000 to 15,000
Subtotal	<u>11,000 to 16,000</u>
Military	
Attacks against fixed targets	Negl.
Armed reconnaissance	5,000
Subtotal	<u>5,000</u>
Total (half killed, half wounded)	<u>16,000 to 21,000</u>



### C. North Vietnamese Countermeasures

#### 1. Repair and Reconstruction

The intense effort by the North Vietnamese to keep LOC's open and to maintain an acceptable level of output from its limited industrial capacity has improved their ability to counter the effects of US/GVN air strikes in 1966. Indeed, the capacity of the transport network has been increased by their efforts. Rapid repair and expansion of the road network together with the transfer of traffic from railroads to roads and waterways have been the major determinants of North Vietnamese success.

The roads in North Vietnam, primarily south of Hanoi, have been kept open almost continuously since the start of the bombing by the extensive use of bypasses to destroyed highway bridges and the construction of new alternative routes. Although the air attack in 1966 concentrated on neutralizing these new projects, the system of countermeasures inaugurated in 1965 has been successful in diminishing the effect of bombings. We estimate that 400 miles of short bypasses and an additional 300 miles of alternative routes were constructed in 1965, with the larger projects completed by September 1966. To complete this work, a system of workcamps was organized. The North Vietnamese used these work camps to anticipate airstrikes on LOC's by pre-positioning labor and materials for repairs to damaged bridges or cratered roads and railbeds. Speed and simplicity of repair have been the main features of the maintenance program which uses large amounts of highly mobile labor and local building materials to insure the required flexibility. Rather than repair highway bridges, the North Vietnamese have chosen to build multiple stream crossings such as fords, ferries, and culverts at any one point. The proliferation of stream crossings has greatly improved their ability to maintain through traffic.

Aerial photography in 1966 has revealed a new bridging technique based on the use of steel cables and removable bridge decking to further reduce vulnerability to air attack. Thirty-eight of these cable bridges have been seen on major routes in North Vietnam to date. Comparative day and night photography of one cable bridge showed that the bridge decking is in place at night for traffic and removed at dawn, leaving only the steel cables exposed to air attack. The North Vietnamese have also expended greater effort in 1966 in camouflaging existing bridges and building alternate dummy bridges with rope and netting.

25X1 Although rail traffic has been maintained almost continuously in 1966 on their main lines from China and Haiphong port to Hanoi, the North Vietnamese have not been able to repair rail bridges rapidly or provide as many multiple stream crossings as they have done on the highways. This has resulted in some lowering of capacity on rail lines relative to other means of transport. Comparisons of rates of repair reveal that the Dong Dang line from China and the line from Haiphong have been kept open more than the other lines.

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Bypass bridges have been built and original rail bridges repaired to operable condition. A new standard-gauge rail line which runs west from Kep to Thai Nguyen is almost complete, while an additional rail has been installed on the meter-gauge line northeast from Kep to the China border. This work provides the North Vietnamese with a standard-gauge line from China and avoids the need to transload goods at Dong Dang on the China border. Bypass railroad bridges have been seen under construction next to bridges in the suburbs of Hanoi and Haiphong which have not been bombed.

An analysis of North Vietnamese repair practices reveals that they have chosen to resort to temporary bridges and bypasses rather than attempt to provide more permanent replacement spans. The estimated cost for permanent replacement of all damaged bridges to date totals \$16.2 million, up about \$6 million since 1 January 1966. Since other types of bypasses were used more often to replace damaged highway bridges, the North Vietnamese have spent only \$2.5 million to date to repair some bridges to operable condition and to provide bypasses to the remainder. This implies an actual North Vietnamese expenditure on repairs and bypasses amounting to only 14 percent of the cost of permanent repairs. In addition we estimate it would cost another \$1.1 million to temporarily replace the present inventory of unrepaired bridges. The total labor input required to complete temporary repairs to all bridges to date is estimated to be 153,000 man-days. By comparison, it is estimated that the North Vietnamese have expended 62,000 man-days on bridge repairs to date, or only 40 percent of what all temporary repairs would require.

## 2. Civil Defense

The North Vietnamese civil defense system has been characterized by increased precautions to minimize casualties and damage during 1966. A new dispersal of the urban population was ordered this year, and shelter systems have been improved and multiplied.

a. Organization and Manpower

Controlled nationally by a Directorate in the Ministry of Defense, Vietnamese civil defense at the province and town level remains a civilian rather than military type of organization. Peoples "air defense work committees" are established in districts, towns, wards, enterprises, and on state farms. These committees are headed by Party or administrative officials, and their subordinate civil defense units are manned by local residents and employees. Steps have been taken to divide medical assets more equitably, undoubtedly because of urban evacuation and the air raids, which occur principally in areas outside Hanoi and Haiphong. In April 1966 the North Vietnamese claimed they had substantially increased the number of medical workers and dispersed medical installations to the countryside. Thus "92 per-cent of the villages now have medical stations."

Because civilian volunteers (perhaps 150,000) are used almost exclusively to perform civil defense duties and because each household is responsible for providing its own shelter, no severe manpower drain seems to have been imposed by civil defense work.

b. Protective Construction

old shelters were refurbished and large numbers of new shelters prepared during 1966. Most progress was reported during the June-September period, and this was probably in compliance with a general order. Shelters of various types are quickly available in Hanoi, and many of the foxholes along the streets have been lined with sections of concrete sewer pipe. According to the North Vietnamese press, some 55,000 shelters were built in Haiphong during one ten-day period. In Vinh, it is claimed that every family has its own shelter, and that there are also 150 kilometers of communication trenches, 8,000 other shelter spaces, and special shelters for machines, documents, and state property. The Vinh Linh area claims 1,000 kilometers of trenches and tunnels, or nearly 15 meters per capita. Other provinces report in a similar manner -- thousands of shelters and many kilometers of trenches built.

Protective measures for industrial equipment are said to have been taken in Hanoi plants -- probably in the form of blast walls between machines, similar to those built in Japan during World War II.

c. Dispersal of Population and Industry

Although the precise degree of urban population dispersed and resettled outside cities is not known, about a 50-percent evacuation seems to have been accomplished. Efforts prior to 1966 may have resulted in about a one-third evacuation of Hanoi. There has been a tendency for evacuees to return to the city, and a letdown in civil defense interest in early 1966 may have had a permissive effect in this regard. A new dispersal order reportedly was issued about 1 July. Recent newspaper accounts have stated that as much as 75 percent of Hanoi's population may now have been evacuated. However, difficulties in persuading people to relocate has been confirmed,

The population of Haiphong was partially dispersed, largely this year, after near-by bombings. According to French press reports, over half the people have left; schools are closed and "not an idle hand remains."

Some dispersal of industry is still reported. However, sample photography of plants has failed to bear out anything more than slightly decreased activity at bona fide industrial installations in Hanoi and Haiphong. It is probable that some small industry and shops have been moved out of urban areas. For example, a North Vietnamese newspaper stated on 1 September, "Over one hundred handicraft cooperatives in Haiphong have been carrying out the evacuation policy seriously." The North Vietnamese concede that the movement of many industries is not possible because of lack of electricity outside cities.

Dispersal, camouflage, and personnel shelters for construction workers are used to reduce damage at road camps.

d. Other Civil Defense Measures

The North Vietnamese use camouflage, movement by night with reduced lighting, and dispersal to reduce transport vulnerability. Business, marketing, and the movement of people and goods is frequently restricted to evening and early morning hours.

The movement of goods offloaded at Haiphong takes place under the cover of darkness. At times, poor weather, hampering air operations, has been reported as a factor inducing some shops to keep open during daylight hours.

In addition to the general effort to resettle permanently residents not directly engaged in production or antiaircraft defense, a noticeable portion of the population of Hanoi disperses during the day and returns at night.

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[redacted] an appreciable increase at night and on weekends in the size of the capital's population. The daily exodus serves not only to reduce the concentration of people in daylight hours but also to provide manpower for industry and agriculture in outlying areas. The influx of people into the city at night has been attributed to a lack of accommodations in the nearby countryside as well as to the opportunity to shop and conduct business in the evening and early morning hours when markets are open.

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e. Alerts

[redacted] the North Vietnamese population usually takes shelter in a disciplined manner during air alerts, which are signaled by sirens, whistles, or other audible means. This, of course, means a disruption of industrial and transport operation, and some personal hardship in areas frequently approached or overflowed by aircraft. While such lost production and hardships are not readily measurable, they seem cumulative in effect and may have particular consequences in some critical areas, such as ports.

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For example, we have several reports from Haiphong [redacted] from April to October 1966 [redacted]

[redacted] that dock work ceased completely during air alerts when workers took shelter. [redacted] the alerts "greatly disrupted" dock work and that one ship was damaged while docking during an alert.

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It thus appears that a population disciplined in taking shelter may be vulnerable in the production sense to frequent harassing overflights or to approaches of aircraft toward transportation and industrial centers.

#### D. North Vietnamese Political Reactions

After enduring 18 months of air attack, the North Vietnamese appear as determined as ever to continue the war. There has been no indication that the bombing program has shaken the confidence of the Hanoi leadership in their ultimate victory. Communist leaders who have talked with the North Vietnamese recently have been greatly impressed with their firmness. A Polish government official recently told a US newsman that Ho Chi Minh's first words to any Communist visitor are always, "We are winning."

There is no sign that any faction of the North Vietnamese leadership is out of step with Ho on the advisability of continuing the conflict, even though the airstrikes have caused the postponement of some of Hanoi's long-cherished program of heavy industry development. At the 12th Central Committee Plenum held some time in 1965, according to a captured document, a decision was made to put the program for the development of heavy industry on the shelf for the duration. Since that time the leadership has appeared to be in complete agreement that the war is the number-one order of business.

One effect of the Rolling Thunder program has been to reinforce certain North Vietnamese attitudes which existed prior to the airstrikes. For example, Hanoi has long been anxious to secure the closest possible Sino-Soviet cooperation in support of the Vietnam war. This has been one reason for the neutral position taken by the North Vietnamese in the Sino-Soviet dispute and for Hanoi's opposition to open hostility between the two powers.

The Rolling Thunder program has also resulted in Hanoi's increased emphasis on the necessity of a halt in US air attacks before there can be a negotiated settlement of the war. The current North Vietnamese position is that the United States must not expect or demand any quid pro quo in return for a cessation of the bombings.

The available evidence indicates that the people of North Vietnam still firmly support the policies of the Hanoi government. The regime has managed to maintain the swell of patriotism which was engendered by the first US airstrikes and has capitalized on a spirit of national resistance against the "US aggressors" to spur the people on to greater sacrifices on behalf of the war in South Vietnam.

Evidence on the feelings of the North Vietnamese toward the war in the south prior to February 1965 was scanty. The available information suggested that the northerners were interested in seeing the insurgents win, but that they did not relish the prospect of having to risk their own economic standing, let alone their lives, on behalf of the southern struggle. Since the bombings of North Vietnam began, however, there appears to be more enthusiasm for supporting the war in the south.

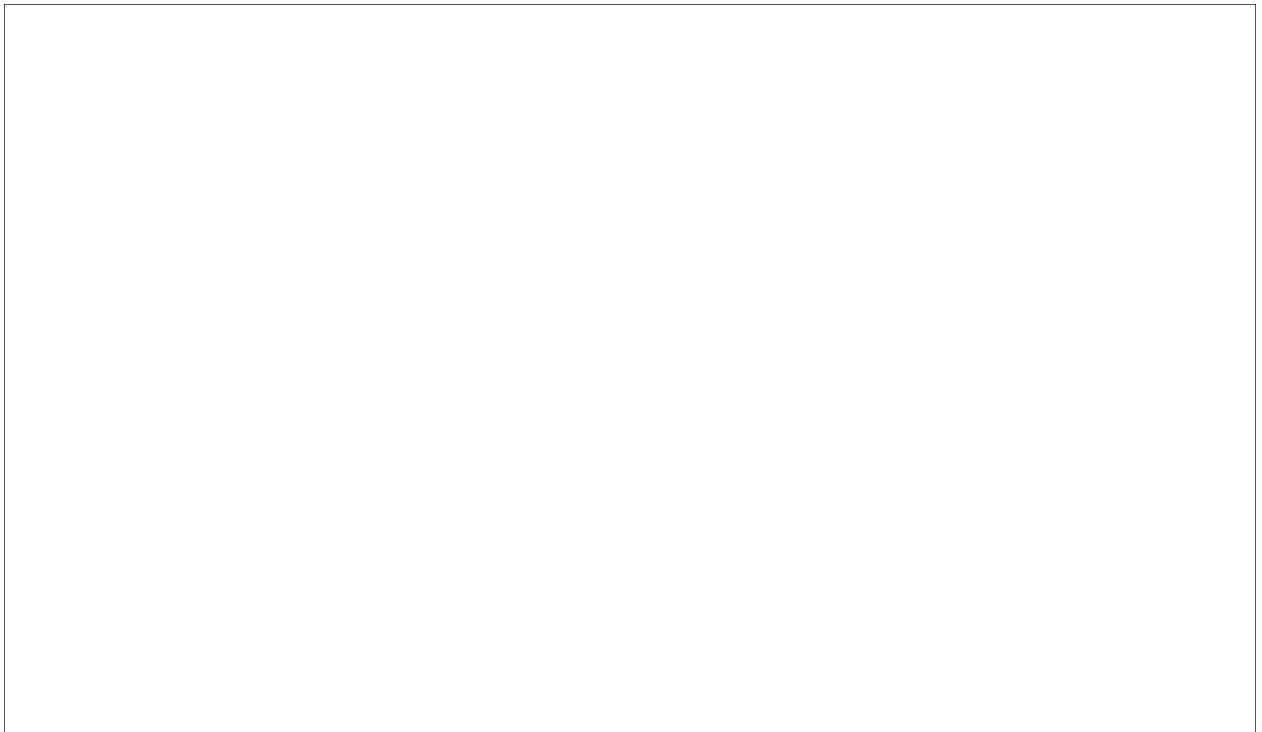
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This decline may reflect some wearying effect caused by the cumulative impact of the bombing. There are at present, however, no discernible political pressures from within North Vietnam sufficient to cause the Hanoi leaders to alter their decision to continue the war effort.

E. Soviet and Chinese Communist Assistance

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2. Economic Aid

25X1 All developments foreshadow substantially increased aid to Hanoi from other Communist countries in late 1966 and 1967, a trend already confirmed by the volume and composition of North Vietnamese imports in 1966 to date. The frequent signings of aid pacts and the stress in the announcements on the support for the war effort indicate a growing emphasis on materials and services needed to continue the war.

25X1 It is estimated that deliveries of economic aid in 1965 were \$150 million, two to three times the average annual level in 1955-64. This sharp rise has been continued in 1966, and, as in 1965, the USSR is the major contributor.

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25X1 After an apparent hiatus of two years, Communist economic assistance to Hanoi was revived in February 1965 when Premier Kosygin visited Hanoi. As the war expanded, numerous new extensions of economic aid were made in mid-1965, but these additions are believed to have been small. Since then, the tempo of aid agreement signings has increased sharply

In 1966, Moscow reported an agreement in May to provide technical assistance, one in September for \$2 million in "free



charge commodities" (possibly consumer goods and medicines), and one in October of additional grants for economic development and increased military aid. China announced additional aid for agriculture in July and a nonrefundable economic and technical agreement in August. In September and October 1966, North Korea and all the Eastern European Communist countries except Yugoslavia signed new aid agreements with North Vietnam. In addition, gifts of money and medicines from workers and other organizations in Communist countries have been announced at a value of \$5 million to \$10 million.

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#### IV. General Assessment of the Rolling Thunder Program

##### A. Agriculture

During the past 18 months the production of paddy rice in North Vietnam -- the main agricultural crop in that country -- was about 200,000 tons below the average. While this is only 3 percent below the average for the 18-month period, all of this shortfall occurred during the past six months. Such a shortfall amounts to about \$17 million worth of rice on the international market. In addition, the production of subsidiary crops -- manioc, sweet potatoes, corn, and green beans -- was probably below normal during the 1965/66 winter/spring season. There is insufficient information, however, on which to estimate the shortfall of these crops, which are important food substitutes for the preferred rice.

It is difficult to determine the extent to which the bombing attacks contributed to the shortfall of agricultural production. Undoubtedly, poor weather in the last half of 1965 and in the first half of 1966 contributed to the poor performance of agriculture. Although there is little evidence that air attacks directly damaged significant amounts of agricultural crops, the indirect disruptive effects of the bombing on agricultural production were considerable. Agriculture in North Vietnam has usually experienced difficulties -- partly because of the chronically undependable weather and partly as a result of management problems associated with the socialization of agriculture into agricultural cooperatives. The war has brought such additional problems as manpower shortages -- particularly skilled manpower -- disruption of normal farming and fishing schedules, and the interruption of electrically powered irrigation systems and the production and distribution of chemical fertilizers. The North Vietnamese have attempted to lessen the disruptive effects of the bombing attacks by importing increased amounts of chemical fertilizers and substantial numbers of diesel generators to power the irrigation systems. These measures have not been completely successful.

The agricultural shortfall, the disruptive effects of the bombing attacks on the transportation of food to deficit areas, and the increased requirements for the war have contributed to food shortages -- particularly in rural areas. However, food supplies in the larger cities such as Hanoi have been maintained at adequate levels, and there have been no indications of critical shortages anywhere. The continuation of the bombing attacks will continue to exacerbate the tight food situation in North Vietnam. However, the self-sufficient nature of the agricultural economy and the availability of food imports -- particularly from Communist China -- suggest that food supplies are not likely to become critical.

## B. Industry

The North Vietnamese industrial sector has not been drastically altered since the start of the Rolling Thunder program in 1965. Some changes have been made in plant production and industrial development because of the war situation, but the regime seems to have been successful in keeping the disruption to a minimum.

The decision to postpone the beginning of the second five-year plan (1966-70) and the substitution of the two-year plan (1966-67) were the result of war pressures on the North Vietnamese economy including the step-up in US bombing. An examination of regime statements since early 1965 on its economic plans suggests that the regime has increased the tempo of some of the programs already begun under the first five-year plan -- dispersal of industry, enlargement and mechanization of agricultural cooperatives, and evacuation of civilians to rural areas. In addition, the decision was taken to postpone heavy industry expansion, with the exception of the machine building and electric powerplants, and to shift emphasis to the increased development of light and local industry. On the surface the decision to postpone heavy industrial expansion appears to have ominous economic overtones for the continued economic development of the country, but the regime has merely postponed part of its heavy industrial expansion; it has not abandoned it.

North Vietnam has published almost no aggregate industrial production data for 1965 and 1966; fragmentary information available indicates that present industrial production is at or above the 1964 level of industrial output. No data on heavy industrial production have been published, but in 1965 the central state-run light industry increased its output by 4.6 percent over 1964, while the output of local industry and handicraft increased by 7.7 percent in 1965. Despite these small increases in industrial output, the regime in August 1966 noted that the "US imperialists have created difficulties for the economy in general and light industry in particular." No information on 1966 output quotas for individual plants or industries is available, but nearly all the reports on individual plants in the popular press are consistent in claiming that the plants are producing at or above their 1965 level despite varying problems.

Evidence of the postponement of heavy industrial development is provided by the recent departure of the Soviet specialists working on the Thac Ba hydroelectric powerplant, which was nearly two years away from completion. No reason was given for their departure. After an examination of the scanty evidence available on industrial

expansion in 1965-66 and future plans for expansion, however, the abandonment of the Thac Ba project appears to be almost unique.

US bombing has created some difficulties in the North Vietnamese industrial sector. However, some of the problems such as poor management and administration in individual plants and the shortage of skilled labor existed before the bombing began. The bombing of the electric powerplants does not appear to have seriously affected industrial output. Power shortages have been observed, particularly in Hanoi, but the individual plants have been able to cope with the situation by using mobile generators and by increasing the number of shifts at the plants.

The step-up in the dispersal program, too, caused some difficulties. Many plants attempted to operate simultaneously at both the original location and at the dispersed site. Production was slowed down by this practice, and transportation and distribution costs increased. The smooth evacuation of the plant workers was difficult. Some workers were evacuated to the dispersed site but were still expected to work at the original site; some workers did not wish to be evacuated and morale problems were evident. The organization of the evacuation was poorly handled by the cadres and the trade union leaders responsible for the movement. There is no hard evidence that industrial production has been seriously slowed down by the dispersal program. Nevertheless, most of the dispersed plants are found in the local, light, and handicraft sectors of industry, which are major components of total industrial output; the dispersal program in these sectors has probably depressed total industrial production in the past year.

The first CIA report dealing with the bombing of North Vietnam released in March 1966, listed 15 major industrial plants, all of which

were examined as possible targets. A review of Hanoi press reports on these plants is helpful in assessing the effect of US bombing on the North Vietnamese industrial plants. The Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Complex is claimed to have lost about 1,000 cadre and workers to the war effort, but still claimed to have exceeded its planned goal. The Haiphong Cement Plant reportedly suffered from a shortage of coal, was harassed by the bombing, and at the end of 1965 was just meeting its planned production quota. The Nam Binh Textile Plant was dispersed but announced that it was installing new machinery in August 1966. The 8 March Textile Plant in Hanoi dispersed part of its operations and found that its transportation costs had increased. The Hanoi Rubber Products Plant lost workers but claimed to have increased its overall output with the production of automobile tires up by 50 percent in the first six months of 1966 as compared with the same period in 1965. The Viet Tri Paper Mill lost production time because of air raids, it was stated, but it improved the quality of its production. The Viet Tri Chemical Combine had a difficult year in 1965. Its machinery and equipment were old, part of it was dispersed, and it lost time because of air raids. Still, the plant claimed achievement of its production quota and began to produce new products.

In combination these claims add up to admitted labor shortages, temporary loss of output due to dispersal, and problems in changing the production mix. They do not, however, reflect serious and prolonged production problems even if one discounts the general claim of meeting planned goals.

In general, the machine building industry has suffered from the same problems as the other industries. One significant observation from reviewing press reports is the conversion of machine building plants to production of agricultural machinery which is aimed at alleviating manpower shortages through increased mechanization of the agricultural cooperatives.

The determination of the regime to continue to train its youth both at home and abroad in technical and academic skills further demonstrates that US bombing has not created severe manpower shortages. There is continuing evidence that North Vietnamese students are being sent to other Communist countries for training. (Around 5,000 students were abroad in 1965 and early 1966, and some reports have suggested that as many as 20,000 may go abroad for study in the next few years.) Further, the regime has just recently opened four colleges with emphasis on technical and engineering skills.

A Rolling Thunder program could have done great damage to the modern industrial sector of the North Vietnamese economy. However, Rolling Thunder target systems chosen did not include the main industrial facilities. The Hanoi regime, possibly now acting on the assumption that industrial installations will not be the main targets of attack, continues to request accelerated deliveries of machinery, goods, and even industrial plants from other Communist countries. Perhaps, if Rolling Thunder had more heavily damaged some of these targets, the North Vietnamese would have a harder time convincing their Communist partners to continue sending industrial aid.

### C. Transportation

The transport system of North Vietnam continues to function adequately. There have been and continue to be periodic delays in the movement of goods, which produce temporary local shortages. But transportation is supporting the essential segments of the economy and is providing the required support for the war in the North and in the South.

The rudimentary nature and somewhat primitive character of the system is probably more of an asset than a hindrance in overcoming the effects of the air war on it. The small, light-weight, antiquated railroad system is augmented by reasonably modern but low-capacity motor trucks and a few modern craft on the inland and coastal waterways. But, for the most part, transport is provided by primitive sampans and junks and animal transport, carts, bicycles, and human bearers. Traffic per capita is exceedingly small. Rumania, for example, a country with substantially the same population and 50 percent more area, has 20 times the tonnage per capita that is found in North Vietnam. Thus North Vietnam with a small industrial base and a population with simple wants and needs can exist with a rudimentary primitive type of transportation system, and the task of impairing significantly the movement of traffic over it by the use of air power becomes difficult.

The initial attacks against transportation in the Rolling Thunder program affected the southern part of the country, which is of relatively minor importance to the economy. Concentration of the attacks in this area provided time for the North Vietnamese to obtain advice from the North Koreans and advice and aid from the Chinese. During this period, organizations were also established for the repair of damage and for the marshaling of all forms of transport for the movement of traffic.



These organizations have been remarkably effective in making the necessary repairs, in providing alternate facilities, and in commandeering all forms of transport to keep the essential traffic moving. As a consequence, after 18 months of attack under the Rolling Thunder program, in spite of the heavy cost in terms of manpower and material, the transportation system is better able to continue operating while coping with damage and loss of personnel than it was when the program began.

If the level of attacks achieved during the first nine months of 1966 is maintained for the remainder of the year, total transport performance in 1966 will continue to increase as it has in past years in terms of tons carried, but will decrease slightly in terms of ton-miles, as it did in 1965 (see Table 14). Rail transportation has been more affected by the attacks than other forms of transport. Performance by railroad transport has been reduced both in terms of tons carried and ton-miles, but rail transportation continues to be the principal mode of transport in terms of ton-miles. Increases in tons carried by other modes have more than compensated for the loss in rail tons carried.

The reduction in rail traffic has not affected the volume of imports and exports moved by rail between China and North Vietnam. The volume of such shipments probably will increase again in 1966 as it had in 1965. Halting of through traffic by destruction of bridges on the two lines important for the movement of foreign trade -- the lines from Hanoi to Dong Dang and Haiphong -- has extended over a relatively small percent of the 18 months.

Destruction of bridges and other facilities on the lines from Hanoi to Lao Cai and Vinh has been more continuous and thus more serious for the domestic economy. Especially noteworthy have been the attacks on the Viet Tri bridge on the Lao Cai line and the Phu Ly bridge on the Vinh line. These bridges have remained out of service for fairly long periods of time. Traffic within the modern industrial sector of the economy -- between Hanoi and the industrial cities of Lam Thao, Viet Tri, and Nam Dinh -- has thus been disrupted. Limited through service has now been restored between these cities, however, and shuttle service between the breaks and the line is in use on the remainder of the lines.

The North Vietnamese [redacted] have expanded and improved the railroad system by the addition of some dual tracking, a new line, and alternate rail bridges for some of the bridges on the Hanoi - Dong Dang and Hanoi - Haiphong lines.

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Table 14

North Vietnam: Estimated Transport Performance  
1964, 1965, and Projected 1966

	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966 a/</u>
Total Performance	20.6	21.7	22.0
Million tons carried	1,200	1,160	1,100
Million ton-miles			
International Trade by Rail			
Imports (thousand tons carried)	180	350	N.A.
Exports (thousand tons carried)	220	170	N.A.

a. Projected for the full year, assuming a continuation of performance at the level of the first nine months.

Dual tracking on the Dong Dang line, which permits both Chinese standard-gauge and North Vietnamese meter-gauge equipment to be used, very likely now extends from the Chinese border south as far as Kep, and some preparations have been made to extend the dual tracking from Kep to Hanoi. A new standard-gauge line from Kep to Thai Nguyen may also have been completed, thus providing a more direct route for shipment of Chinese coal to the iron and steel complex at Thai Nguyen and an alternative route for rail traffic between Kep and Hanoi. Another improvement directly related to the war effort is the extension of a low-cost makeshift rail line south of Vinh toward the Demilitarized Zone. This line is kept in service with inexpensive expedients in spite of intensive bombing.

North Vietnam has suffered a high level of destruction of railroad rolling stock, particularly in 1966, but there is no evidence of a shortage of locomotives or freight cars. It is estimated that the inventory of locomotives remains at about the pre-April 1965 number. The North Vietnamese freight car inventory, however, has been significantly reduced (see Table 1). The Chinese probably have made freight cars available to North Vietnam from the meter-gauge rolling stock of Yunnan Province and formerly used for the Chinese transit traffic through North Vietnam. The loss of this traffic and other traffic such as the transport of apatite after the

Lao Cai line was interdicted in July of 1965 has reduced the requirement for rail transport. Furthermore, Chinese standard-gauge equipment can be used on the new dual-gauge and standard-gauge lines in North Vietnam. Much of the reportedly destroyed rolling stock probably consisted of the makeshift equipment used on the line south of Hanoi, the type that probably could be built in North Vietnam. Thus North Vietnam has sustained a high level of destruction of rolling stock and has continued to operate the railroads at a reasonable level. The North Vietnamese are nevertheless negotiating with the Chinese to buy quite large numbers of rolling stock, presumably to avoid using Chinese equipment within North Vietnam.

North Vietnam is making increasing use of highway and inland and coastal water transport. Traffic moving over these networks is more difficult to disrupt than is traffic on the railroad system. Highway and water transport is also being used to shuttle traffic around breaks in railroad lines. It is estimated that performance by these modes increased in 1965 and 1966, both in terms of tons carried and ton-miles. These increases have been made possible by the considerable expansion and improvement of the road and inland water networks and maintenance of the inventory of transport equipment at the necessary level. New alternate roads have been built and additional waterways dredged. Alternate highway bridges, for the most part pontoon or cable types, as well as ferries and fords have been or are being built. Imports of motor trucks by North Vietnam from Communist countries far exceeded the destruction of these vehicles by air attack in 1965 and have kept pace with such destruction so far in 1966 (see Table 16). In spite of extensive destruction of watercraft, the number observed in use is constantly increasing. The North Vietnamese can build many of the small types observed in use, and Communist countries are providing small modern tugs, dry cargo barges, and tank barges.

The truck route into and through southern Laos is likewise considerably more capable of supporting infiltration now than it was 18 months ago. The fairweather truckable network has been greatly extended and provided with many miles of alternate routes. The portion of the year during which trucks can use the route has been increased by better road alignment and surfacing. After the heavy rains in the fall of 1965, truck traffic began to flow south into Laos a month earlier than it had in 1964. This year, truck traffic into Laos has begun to move in significant volume a month earlier than it did in 1965.

Table 15

North Vietnam: Rolling Stock Inventory  
as of the End of 1964 and 1965 and 1 October 1966

	Units
Locomotives (totals rounded)	
As of the end of 1964	120
Imports during 1965	4
Domestic production	3
Losses	-6
As of the end of 1965	120
Imports during January-September 1966	6
Losses	-10 <u>a/</u>
As of 1 October 1966	120
Freight cars <u>b/</u> (totals rounded)	
As of the end of 1964	1,800
Imports during 1965	60
Losses (230 destroyed times 60 percent)	-140
As of the end of 1965	1,700
Imports during 1966	60
Losses (1,060 destroyed times 60 percent)	-640
As of 1 October 1966	1,100 <u>c/</u>

a. Probably includes some makeshift locomotives used on the rail line south of Hanoi. It has been assumed, therefore, that the mainline locomotive inventory has been maintained at about the end of 1964 level by imports.

b. Reported losses of railroad freight cars have included small makeshift cars used on the rail line south of Hanoi as well as some exaggerations from pilot reports. Thus only 60 percent of those reported destroyed and none of those reported damaged have been deducted from the inventory.

c. These data represent a significant decrease in the inventory during 1966, but this inventory is still sufficient for performance at the level estimated. The actual number of freight cars in North Vietnam must be significantly higher than indicated, however. No evidence exists of a shortage of freight cars in North Vietnam. The number of freight cars imported is a minimum figure. Furthermore, Communist China probably has loaned or given North Vietnam all the freight cars needed. Although no information is available to indicate that Chinese cars from Yunnan Province are operating in North Vietnam, it is logical that this province has made meter-gauge stock available to North Vietnam.

Table 16

North Vietnam: Cargo Truck Inventory a/  
as of the End of 1964 and 1965 and 1 October 1966

As of the end of 1964		9,000
Imports during 1965		3,443
Losses	<u>900</u>	-900
Airstrikes	360	
Normal retirement	540	
As of the end of 1965		11,500 <u>b/</u>
Imports during January-September 1966		3,200
Losses	<u>3,200</u>	-3,200
Airstrikes in North Vietnam	1,700	
Airstrikes in Laos	1,000	
Normal retirement	500	
As of 1 October 1966		11,500

a. Includes cargo trucks of one-ton or more capacity. Losses from inventory due to airstrikes were computed using 75 percent of the number reported destroyed and 25 percent of the number reported damaged. Normal retirement was computed at the rate of 6 percent per year.

b. North Vietnam had at least 3,000 additional vehicles, such as jeeps, command cars, ambulances, and service vehicles.

Maintenance and expansion of the transport system has been very costly to North Vietnam in terms of manpower diverted and resources expended, in spite of the use of low-cost expedients wherever possible. Through September 1966, repair and restoration cost of damaged or destroyed transport facilities and equipment totaled more than \$50 million, or almost one-third of the measurable direct and indirect cost of the Rolling Thunder program to North Vietnam, as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Repair and Restoration Cost (Million US \$)</u>
Bridges	<u>19.8</u>
Restoration	16.2
Temporary repair	3.6
Transportation equipment	<u>30.5</u>
Railroad yards and ports	<u>1.0</u>
Total	<u>51.3</u>

The restoration cost at the end of 1965 amounted to only \$17.2 million. The increase of \$34.1 million during the first nine months of 1966 is accounted for chiefly by damage and destruction to transport equipment amounting to \$24.5 million. The cost of restoring and repairing bridges increased by \$9.3 million, while railroad yards and ports increased by \$300,000.

The sharp increase in the transport equipment category reflects the heavy emphasis on armed reconnaissance missions in the Rolling Thunder program throughout 1966. These equipment losses have been largely offset by imports from Communist countries. Possibly a more serious loss to North Vietnam has been the loss of trained personnel.

The North Vietnamese, with Chinese aid, have gained in experience and efficiency in expanding routes and making the necessary repairs. As a consequence the transport system is now considerably less vulnerable than it was during 1965. The system is performing at a level adequate for military and essential economic needs. It can be expected to operate at this level unless there is a basic change in the pattern and weight of air attack against transportation in North Vietnam.

#### D. Foreign Trade

North Vietnam's foreign trade, since the initiation of Rolling Thunder, has been marked by two major developments: (1) an increasing volume of imports from Communist countries (Free World imports have been largely maintained); and (2) a general reduction in exports. By the fall of 1966, seaborne imports seemed to have reached a peak set

by the capacity of ports and their connecting rail distribution facilities, while known exports continued to decline.

Recent aid agreements signed by other Communist countries with Hanoi signal the intention to continue a high level of shipments to North Vietnam. Imports were sharply accelerated in both 1965 and 1966. Goods received from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe reached an estimated value of \$180 million in 1965,\* nearly 65 percent more than in 1964. Comparable value data are not available for 1966, but the volume of seaborne imports from Communist countries in the first nine months averaged about 50 percent more than the same period in 1965. Imports of manufactured goods (largely machinery, equipment, and rolled steel products) comprised a major share of the imports from Communist countries and accounted for the sharpest increases in volume of shipments. Imports of fertilizer and petroleum have also increased significantly.

The value of North Vietnam's exports remained steady within a range of \$100 million to \$110 million in both 1964 and 1965. Seaborne exports of apatite, which had an average f.o.b. value of nearly \$418,000 a month in the first seven months of 1965, virtually ceased following the initiation in July 1965 of recurrent interdictions of the rail line connecting the apatite mines at Lao Cai with Haiphong. The major export losses, however, followed the strikes against coal processing facilities at Cam Pha in April 1966. Seaborne coal exports in the first quarter of 1966 had an average f.o.b. value of \$1.8 million a month, but have had an average value of only \$0.6 million a month since April and the trend is still downward. There have been additional reductions in seaborne exports of cement, pig iron, and manufactured goods, but the decline in these exports cannot be directly related to the effects of bombing. It is also possible, but not probable, that increased volumes of these commodities have been shipped undetected to Communist China. Continuation of the present degree of retardation of shipments of coal and apatite will cause North Vietnam's export earnings in 1966 to be at least \$12 million less than in 1965, approximately half of which is in Free World hard currency, thereby worsening the already large imbalance between imports and exports.

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\* The estimated distribution of these imports, which include economic aid, is as follows: from China and the Soviet Union, \$75 million each; and from the Eastern European countries, \$30 million.

### E. Manpower Developments in North Vietnam

The Rolling Thunder program, together with other US/GVN military actions in South Vietnam, has placed a significant strain on North Vietnam's manpower resources. The allocation of manpower in response to the air attacks has taxed the ingenuity of North Vietnam's leadership, has forced the country to make meaningful sacrifices in terms of disruption to some normal civilian pursuits, and has inflicted real costs resulting from disruptions of economic activity, most notably in agriculture, transportation, and construction. At the same time, the regime has allocated the bulk of its physically fit youth coming of military age to building up its military forces. In spite of these pressures there are several indications that the quantitative drain on manpower may have peaked during 1966.

The buildup of North Vietnam's armed forces and the replacement of manpower losses in South Vietnam have required the mobilization of at least 170,000 men since 1 January 1965. This figure may be larger if a substantial number of troops are being discharged because of age or illness. At a minimum, total conscription for military service probably has approached 80 percent of the number of physically fit males -- 220,000 -- reaching the draft age of 18 in 1965-66. There is, however, a total pool estimated at about 2.1 million to 2.3 million males in the 15 to 49 age group who are physically fit for military service.

A large measure of the military build-up in North Vietnam is accounted for by forces committed to defensive programs in reaction to the Rolling Thunder program. At least 70,000 North Vietnamese troops, or close to 20 percent of the armed forces, are assigned to units involved almost exclusively in defensive programs and counter-measures against the Rolling Thunder program. This estimate includes those forces assigned to the Air Force, to AAA and SAM units, and to engineering and transportation units. In addition a large number of militia are assigned to air defense activities.

The mobilization of civilian labor has exceeded the manpower needs for the build-up of military forces. By early 1966, North Vietnam had to reallocate large amounts of labor to repair or reconstruction activities and to dispersal and emergency programs directly related to the Rolling Thunder attack. These programs are believed to have required the full-time services of 200,000 workers and the part-time utilization of another 100,000. The obligation of some 150,000



persons to fulfill civil defense responsibilities has created an additional part-time diversion of labor.

The size of this commitment of labor is estimated to have remained stable during 1966. Although the weight of air attack has increased, the labor force has gained a great deal of experience in making quick repairs, using camouflage, and adopting other innovations to neutralize the effects of air attack. The experience gained in this type of construction work has enabled the North Vietnamese to develop faster recuperability from airstrikes. As the expertise and hence the labor productivity of the North Vietnamese improves, and assuming the pattern of air attack does not change, it is estimated that the North Vietnamese will be able to reduce the size of the repair-of-damage labor force and still increase its effectiveness. The commitment of labor could be greater, however, if more of the airstrikes against the logistic target system were concentrated on the rail and combination rail/highway bridges on the major LOC's in the northern part of the country.

Two other manpower drains of some significance are the North Vietnamese assigned to repair and construction activities on the infiltration route through Laos, and casualties resulting from the Rolling Thunder program.

The road repair and construction activities in Laos require the commitment of some 20,000 to 25,000 persons, about three-fourths of whom are North Vietnamese. Since the pattern of this activity has not changed appreciably in the last six months, it is estimated that this commitment has remained stable.

Casualties inflicted in 1966 as a result of the Rolling Thunder program are tentatively estimated at from 16,000 to 21,000. This would be an increase of 40 to 50 percent over the level estimated for 1965. Casualties are probably about three-fourths civilian (principally persons engaged in logistic and transportation activities in direct support of the war effort) and one-fourth military.

The drain on North Vietnam's manpower resulting from military and civilian mobilization and casualties in both North and South Vietnam has amounted to 400,000 to 425,000 persons. This includes an estimated military mobilization of at least 170,000 persons and the full-time assignment of about 220,000 persons to war-associated tasks in North Vietnam and Laos, largely a consequence of Rolling Thunder. This total diversion amounts to about 5 percent of North Vietnam's civilian labor force.

The ability of North Vietnam to meet the numerical commitment of manpower resources is apparent. However, there are many indications that the manpower drain has inflicted strains on the country. Recent indications of possible war-associated strains on manpower are reports that additional women have been trained and are serving in agricultural occupations and in the militia, and that the regime is trying -- apparently with limited success -- to make greater use of unskilled workers from the peasant and urban population. The disappointing fifth-month harvest has probably made it incumbent on the regime to provide more agricultural manpower in order to achieve a successful tenth-month harvest. The regime has also been forced to shelve some plans for industrial expansion.

#### F. Third Country Attitudes

There has been little significant change in the attitudes of Free World countries toward the US bombing program during the last two years, either because of its continuation or escalation. Free World reaction to the latest escalation of the bombings -- the strikes against the POL storage facilities in the Hanoi-Haiphong area -- produced the normal leftist and Communist cries of "outrage" in Free World states. The overall official reaction, however, was more restrained and less critical than expected.

The so-called non-aligned, or neutral, nations who have attempted from time to time to serve as intermediaries in getting negotiations started have not altered their basic positions during the past year as a result of the continued US airstrikes. The unyielding attitude of the North Vietnamese, however, has had a somewhat sobering impact on certain of these neutral nations. In particular, they have realized that the United States has a valid point in demanding some sign from Hanoi that it will respond positively to a cessation of the bombings. This has not produced a swing toward the United States by these nations, but it has served somewhat to mitigate North Vietnamese efforts to convince the neutrals that the United States is solely to blame for the continuation of the war.

#### 1. Soviet and Eastern European Attitudes

The effectiveness of the US airstrikes in destroying North Vietnamese military hardware and in disrupting the transportation system in North Vietnam has caused Hanoi to place increasing demands on the USSR and the Eastern European countries. In response, these countries have agreed to provide additional economic and military goods.

At the same time, however, there is growing apprehension in the USSR and the Eastern European countries that their own national interests will be threatened by a continuation of the bombing raids. On numerous occasions during the past several weeks, Eastern European diplomats have assured the United States that their increased aid to Hanoi is designed to wean the North Vietnamese away from China and thus improve the chances of getting Hanoi to the negotiating table.

These diplomats clearly believe that there is no chance of getting Hanoi to negotiate until the United States ceases its bombing of North Vietnam. Thus far, however, neither the USSR nor any of the Eastern European countries has indicated that it can assure the United States that Hanoi will make a positive move toward negotiations if US airstrikes cease. The Poles have advised the United States that they do not intend to carry US overtures for negotiations to Hanoi again unless they are given some sign that such activity on their part will be productive.

## 2. Communist China's Attitude

The Chinese have not altered their position on the war as a result of the Rolling Thunder program. They remain as determined as ever to oppose any move toward peace which does not entail total US capitulation to North Vietnamese demands. Chinese policy remains even tougher than that of the Vietnamese on what it will take to get negotiations started. Peking still insists that the United States must withdraw its troops from South Vietnam before talks can begin.

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